

VZCZCXYZ0004
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHSG #2224 2961335
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 231335Z OCT 06
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0236

UNCLAS SANTIAGO 002224

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR R/MR, I/PP, WHA/BSC, WHA/PDA, INR/IAA, PM

STATE FOR INL, INR/R/MR, NEA/IR

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [PTER](#) [CI](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: CHILE MEDIA REACTION - IRAQ

¶1. On October 21, conservative, independent "La Tercera" (Sat. circ. 195,626) carried an editorial entitled "Similarity between Iraq and Vietnam." Quote:

¶2. "President George W. Bush admitted similarities between the war in Iraq and Vietnam... He specifically compared the 1968 Tet Offensive, where the North Vietnamese communist forces achieved an important tactical and psychological advantage, and Iraq, where the U.S. military authorities have admitted their inability to contain the growing wave of attacks against its forces and the Iraqi government.... This has political significance, because until now the White House had explicitly objected to any comparison between the two conflicts.... But other similarities are also valid.

¶3. As in Vietnam, in Iraq the United States seems to be trapped in a conflict it cannot control...has no strategy to withdraw or one that will allow it to remain and move toward clear objectives.... The goal of that war, contain the expansion of Communism...was at least easy to learn. The current one -- to make Iraq a functional democracy so that it can...instill democratic values in an important and conflictive region -- is not only ambitious, but harder to assess.... Plus, the war in Iraq has been put in the context of the War on Terrorism...a policy that...has emotionally involved Americans after the 9-11 attacks.

¶4. Therefore, although the United States is in the process of restating its strategy in Iraq, this war could become a paradigm for the world power as Vietnam was in terms of shaping...the political, military, and strategic position of the White House, the Pentagon, and the Department of State. Iraq is already determining how other conflicts are handled (Iran and North Korea) and will be a reference point for future crisis."

KELLY